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ABSTRACT

Described is the parent training component of the Severe Personal Adjustment Program for severely emotionally disturbed school-aged children. Among program objectives listed are the following: pinpoint and define behavior (operationally), evaluate situations and environments in which the behavior occurs, specify contingencies presently operating, observe and record target behavior daily, and devise intervention plans and establish performance expectations. Three case studies are presented to illustrate the application of plan sheets, token reinforcement procedures, and a multi-purpose reporting system. Included are such materials as an outline of specific procedures for establishing a home management program, sample plan sheets, and behavior charts. (SBH)

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Intervention strategies and procedures for helping parents of severely emotionally disturbed children in home settings.

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55th Annual International Council
for Exceptional Children
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Atlanta, Georgia

EC 100 724

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It is a truism that Severe Emotional Disturbance affects the behavior of children across all environments: in public school classrooms, community settings, and in homes. A current and very appropriate trend calls for special education programs to service these and other severely handicapped children in numerous settings, especially the home. To do this, programs need to involve parents at all levels of participation. Sharing information and developing an active and continous working relationship are two parent activities, central to this purpose. The Severe Personal Adjustment Program views these as essential in the development of successful programs for the severely emotionally disturbed child.

Accordingly, we have developed a parent training component, founded primarily on the application of behavioral principles, though non-directive and humanistic approaches are also used. The program involves individual work with parents and often takes place in the home settings where the problems actually exist. Meetings with parents are held on a bi-monthly basis, though ample time is set aside for crisis interventions and problem solving. Whenever possible, behavior change programs, focusing on diverse academic, social, and self-help behavior problems, are conducted as cooperative endeavors between home and school. While it is true that each environment will have its own behavioral concerns and consequently its own individual programs, we have experienced greater cooperation and communication when joint endeavors are pursued.

The overall goal of training is to help parents become effective

and independent behavior managers for their own children.

Insert Overheads # 1 and 2 about here

When beginning to work with parents, the following set of procedures is used. During the initial stages of training, it is used (1) as a guide for gathering important information about the parent's behavioral concerns for their children. Later (2), it provides a workable format for structuring behavioral interventions.

The procedures are presented in a sequence of objectives and activities. Briefly, they are:

Specific procedures for establishing a home management program:

OBJECTIVES	ACTIVITIES
(1) Pinpoint and define behavior (operationally)	List and objectively define the family's major behavioral concerns about child's behavior
	Rank order those concerns from highest to lowest
	List and objectively define the child's positive, adaptive and desireable behavior
	Select one behavior of critical importance to the family. Caution: Probability of success is a prime factor in selecting behavior for change.
(2) Evaluate situations and environments in which the behavior occurs.	Evaluate the situations, environments and circumstances under which the target behavior usually occurs.
(3) Specify contingencies presently operating	Evaluate the reactions of the parents and others after the problem behavior is emitted.

(4) Observe and record target behavior daily

Describe simple recording system and corresponding recording sheet

Observe and record target behavior using system and appropriate data sheet on a daily basis

Reliability check on target behavior between parents and parent counselor to clarify both the nature and magnitude of the problem

Make necessary adjustments in behavior definition or recording procedures

(5) Chart and inspect target behavior data

Devise simple visual displays (charts) for target behavior

Record daily observations on charts

Inspect data for variability and trend before ending baseline period

(6) Devise intervention plans and establish performance expectations

Develop appropriate reinforcing and punishing contingencies for specific target behavior

Ideally, interventions should be:
Practical
Economical
Feasible
Realistic
Applicable
Effective

Next, establish a desired rate (frequency/day) or goal for target behavior

Establish a desired target date for the behavior and the respective desired rates

Establish sequentially placed interim desired rates and dates for the target behavior

(7) Implement plans	Apply contingencies to target behavior using: consistency constancy immediacy Observe and record target behavior daily Chart target behavior daily
(8) Analyze data	Inspect target behavior with respect to desired rates and dates
(9) Be prepared to make data based decisions in order to maintain/change intervention plans	Suggest appropriate modifications for program maintenance or change

A central element for developing and structuring a home intervention program is the Plan Sheet.

Insert Overhead #3 (plan sheet) about here

Its patterned after one developed by Dr. Norris Haring and his associates while at the University of Kansas, and later at the University of Washington.

The Plan Sheet, like the prescriptions, specifies the variables used by parents to work with their children at home. After a concern is identified and stated in behavioral terms, an aim is selected.

(A represents Accelerate

M represents maintain

D represents decelerate)

Marking an aim helps to identify and distinguish programs when many plan

sheets are used with a child.

Five columns, headed by Program, Instructions, Behavior, How (Arrangement), and What (Consequence) are sequenced in a temporal order under the S-R behavioral paradigm.

Information gathered from the format shown earlier and from other sources is placed in the appropriate column, thus forming a basic set of learning conditions. Combining the Plan Sheet with objective and meaningful observational data makes it possible to continuously evaluate the variables specified on the Plan Sheet. By intelligently and systematically altering one variable at a time, followed by additional observation, it is possible to arrange optimal learning conditions.

I would like to present three short case studies to illustrate the application of some of these procedures.

Henry--First Case Study:

The first case study may help to illustrate how plan sheets are used to specify and evaluate changes in the child's program.

Henry, a seven year old, would play in his bedroom prior to bedtime. He would take one toy after another out of his toybox, but always failed to return them. His mother claimed she didn't like the mess and that it was hazardous to move about in the room. Repeated demands and threats failed to produce consistent toy picking up behavior.

Insert Overhead #4 about here

We devised a plan in which the mother would systematically reinforce picking-up responses and manually correct refusals to comply, if needed.

At bedtime, Henry's mother would instruct him to pick-up his toys, then praise and hug him for doing so.

Insert Overhead #5 about here

The chart indicates initial success in the first phase, with dramatic declines near its end, due to relaxing the contingency. The next phase involved a re-commitment to follow the procedures. After this proved effective, reinforcement was gradually faded out as noted here and earlier on the plan sheet.

Second Case Study--Jane

This study involved a ten year old girl who presented a history of chronic nocturnal (Bedtime) and diurnal (daytime) enuresis. She also wet her pants alot. Her mother had attempted numerous techniques ranging from restriction of liquids to scoldings and spankings, without success. A medical examination failed to suggest organicity as a basis for the enuresis. Systematically studying the rate of behavior and the settings in which it occurred failed to provide a clear picture. The behavior occurred under varying conditions and was apparently subject to the internal motivations of the girl.

Having a well established baseline (10 years long), we decided to implement an intervention, similar to the Azrin and Foxx (1971) "Dry Pants" training procedure. The procedure involved giving the child frequent and regular trials at successful toileting. Small quantities (1 or 2 ounces) of liquid were given at frequent intervals

between toileting trials. This was done to increase the probability of successful toileting for the girl. Since token reinforcement was already in use in the home, their application in this program was a natural and logical extension. Tokens were given for each two minutes of sitting on the toilet seat, quietly. The child was required to attempt toileting behavior for a maximum of six to ten minutes per trial. If the girl successfully toileted, she was permitted to exchange her tokens immediately for primary reinforcement, usually in the form of candy, cookies, or other treats. Verbal praise and feed-back were lavishly and contingently applied as well. Tokens earned during unsuccessful attempts at toileting were not immediately exchanged and were included in the ongoing token program instead.

Insert Overhead #6 about here

As the daily recording sheet shows, time in half-hour blocks was marked, as well as the amount of liquid and whether or not successful toileting occurred. Since the program was conducted both at school and at home, recordings were made daily by her teacher and her mother. No direct intervention was attempted during the night, as the "Urine Alarm" device used by Azrin and Foxx was not available (too expensive).

Insert Overhead 7 about here

The chart shows an increase to about 75 percent on toileting oppor-

tunities. However, it appears that daytime accidents remain relatively unstable as yet. Most interesting though is the fact that Jane is experiencing dry mornings about 50 percent of the time now. Apparently, the frequent daytime exercise of bladder control is having some noticeable effects on Bed Wetting behavior.

Third Case Study--Jeff

The last case study involves a 16 year old boy, Jeff, enrolled in our secondary level classroom. Throughout his history, he has been given to episodes of violence during which he would verbally and/or physically threaten and attack peers and even his teachers. As this behavior is seen as a serious threat to maintaining public school placement, immediate efforts were taken to avoid the obvious consequence.

Insert Overhead #8 about here

His parents and teacher were consulted, the result of which was a note-home from school program. Wanting to provide the parents with meaningful information about the child's daily performance, we devised a multi-purpose reporting system. Included in the reporting were ratings on (1) compliance, (2) academic work, (3) self-control and (4) social interaction. Each of these categories was operationally defined and assigned a daily rating (5 = excellent; 1 = poor). The note was then sent home with the child to be given to the parents. The parents would then apply differential consequences, ranging from full privileges to none at all, based on the number of rating points

received daily. Special rewards, to be exchanged on weekends, were held contingent on Jeff's getting 80 or more rating points per week.

Insert Overhead #9 about here

Note that the ratings quickly reached the maximum possible; that is, 20 per day.

Insert Overhead #10 about here

On a more objective basis, observe the simultaneous decrease in threatening behavior as recorded at school.

To summarize, home based intervention programs, carried out by parents, have demonstrated their worth. Their value could be evaluated in terms of the number of behaviors brought under control, or the academic skills acquired. These measures are tangible and are indeed meaningful to schools.

Yet to parents, the parent training program here described has helped them derive certain intangibles. In most cases, parents have expressed feelings of satisfaction at seeing their children go forward, under their control and direction, toward understandable and realistic goals. This, for most parents, represents the first time such progress has been felt, or dared dreamed possible.

Specific Procedures for Establishing a Home Management Program

OBJECTIVES	ACTIVITIES
(1) Pinpoint and define behavior (operationally).	List and objectively define the family's major behavior concerns about child's behavior.
	Rank order those concerns from highest to lowest.
	List and objectively define the child's positive, adaptive and desirable behavior.
	Select one behavior of critical importance of the family. Caution: Probability of success is a prime factor in selecting behavior for change.
(2) Evaluate situations and environments in which the behavior occurs.	Evaluate the situations, environments and circumstances under which the target behavior usually occurs.
(3) Specify contingencies	Evaluate the reactions of the parents and others after the problem behavior is emitted.
(4) Observe and record target behavior daily	Describe simple recording system and corresponding recording sheet.
	Observe and record target behavior using system and appropriate data sheet on a daily basis.
	Reliability check on target behavior between parents and parent counselor.
	Make necessary adjustments in behavior definition or recording procedures.
(5) Chart and inspect target behavior data.	Devise simple visual displays (charts) for target behavior.
	Record daily observations on charts.
	Inspect data for variability and trend before ending baseline period.

OBJECTIVES	ACTIVITIES
(6) Devise intervention plans and establish performance expectations.	Develop appropriate reinforcing and punishing contingencies for specific target behavior. Interventions must be: practical economical feasible realistic applicable effective Establish a desired rate (frequency/day) for target behavior. Establish a desired target date for the behavior and the respective desired rates. Establish sequentially placed interim rates and dates for the target behavior.
(7) Implement plans	Apply contingencies to target behavior using: consistency constancy immediacy Observe and record target behavior daily. Chart target behavior daily.
(8) Analyse data	Inspect target behavior with respect to desired rates and dates.
(9) Maintain/change intervention plans	Suggest appropriate modifications for program maintenance or change.

SPA Project

Plan Sheet# ___ Con: _____
Location: _____
Managers: _____

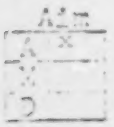
Aim
A
B
C

Behavioral Objective: Specify the behavior, its direction and goal.

PROGRAM	INSTRUCTIONS	BEHAVIOR	HOW	WHAT
Describe the program: What, how, when and who will conduct the program.	Describe what happens before and/or during each occurrence of the behavior.	Describe the behavior objectively so all can treat it in a similar manner and so an accurate record of it may be obtained.	Specify the relationship between the behavior and its consequence. (Ratio or interval arrangement).	Describe "What" consequence is applied and by whom.

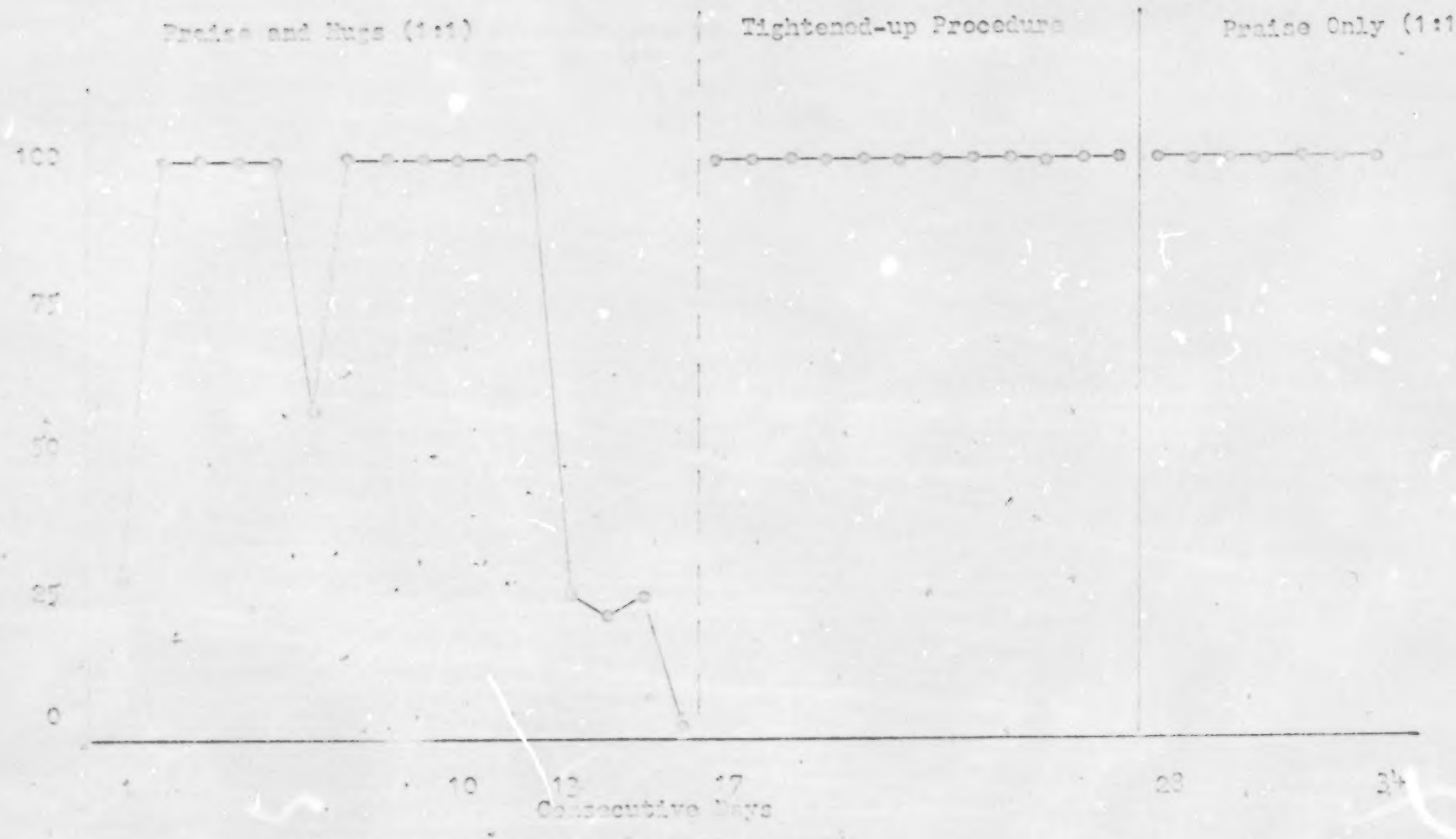
SPA Project

Plan Sheet# 1 for: Henry
Location: Home
Managers: Henry's mother



Behavioral Objective: To increase toy picking-up behavior to a 100% level.

PROGRAM	INSTRUCTIONS	BEHAVIOR	HOW	WHAT
The program is to increase Henry's picking-up his toys behavior at bedtime. The program will take place at home on a daily basis and will be conducted by Henry's mother. (Date started)	At bedtime, the mother goes to Henry's room and announces, "Henry, its time for bed. Please pick up your toys."	Picking-up toys: Henry is to pick up each toy and place it in his toy box by himself. Non-compliance: Henry doesn't respond within 5 seconds of mother's request.	1 : 1 1 : 1	Following each response, Henry is praised and hugged. Phrases like, "Good picking-up Henry" or "Good boy" are used. Henry's mother manually helps him respond. (Date started) Praise is used alone. No hugs.



Percentage of Self-Initated Pick-Ups of Toys.

Dry

	X				
	X				
	X				
		X			
		X		X	wet pants
	X				
	X				
	X				
	X				
	X				
	X				
	X				
	X				
		X			
	X				
	X				

SUBJECT: _____ for: _____

LOCATION: Home

RECORDER: parents

DATE: Feb 5, 1987

SPA PROTOCOL

ATM

1 XX

2

3

BEHAVIOR & DEFINITION: TOILETING: Voiding fluid in the toilet.

Daily Report Card -

Behavior	Score 1	2	3	4	5
Academic work				4	
Compliance					5
Self Control					5
Social Interaction					5
Total					19

Comments:

Excellent Day!

Date: 3-7-77

SPA PROJECT

CLIENT #: _____ for: _____

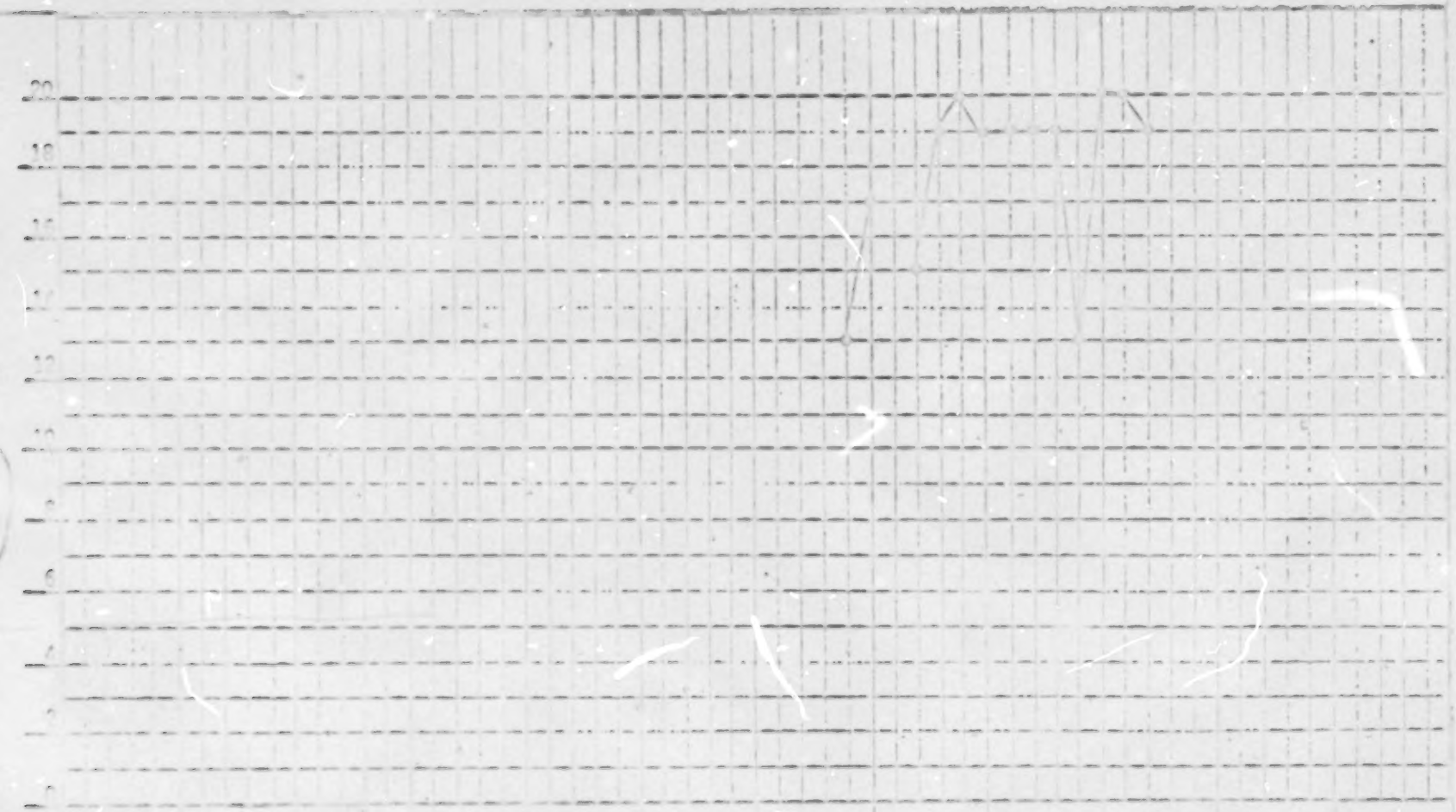
LOCATION: Secondary Classroom

OBSERVER: Ms. Hendrickson

DATE: February 17, 1977

	AEM
A	YY
M	
D	

BEHAVIOR & DEFINITION: TOTAL of DAILY RATINGS for 1) FOLLOWING DIRECTIONS, 2) ACADEMIC WORK, 3) SELF-CONTROL and 4) SOCIAL INTERACTION.



SPA PROJECT

OBSVR 1: _____ for: _____

LOCATION: Secondary Classroom

OBSERVER: Ms. Hendrickson

DATE: January 3, 1977

ATM

A	
M	
D	XX

BEHAVIOR & DEFINITION: 'THREATENING POSTURES or GESTURES'

40

30

20

10

0

26

27